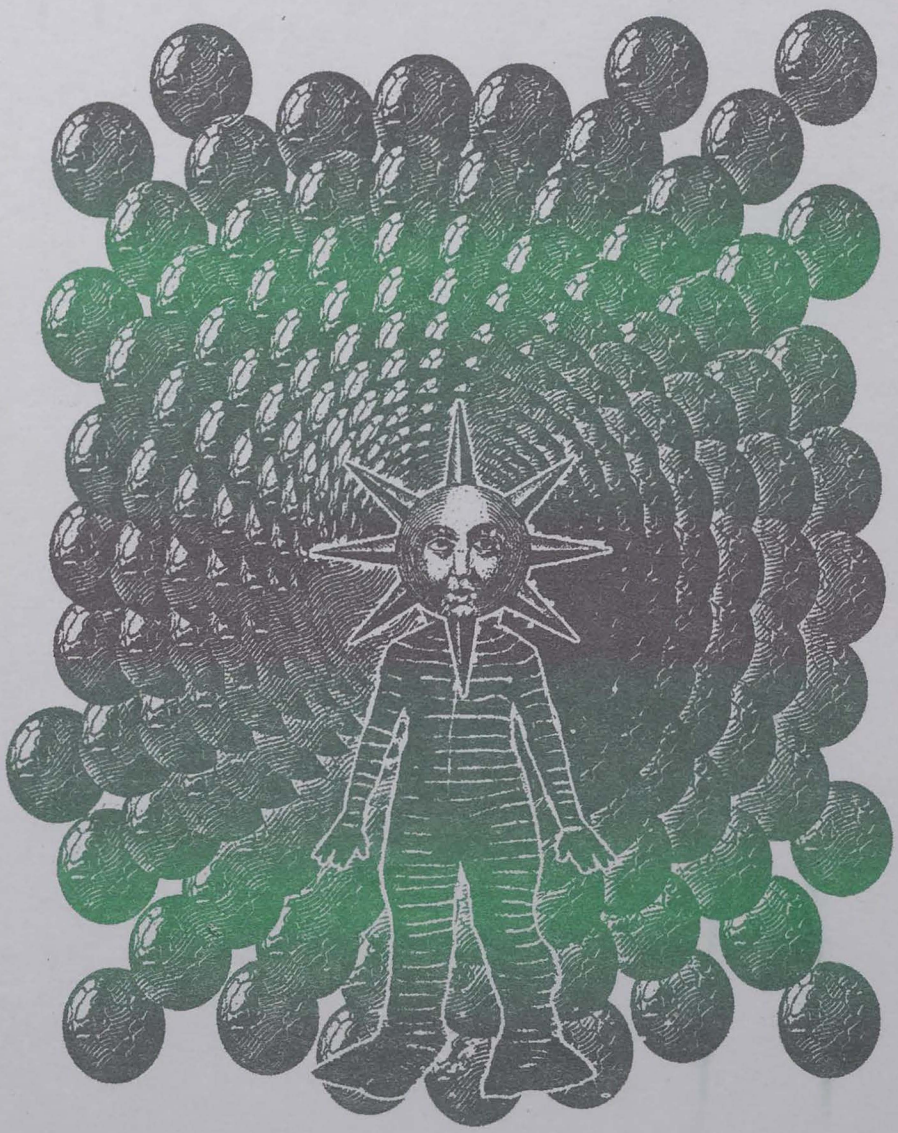
THE BOREAL CROWN



AND THE DOWNFALL OF CIVILIZATION

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Charles Fourier Prefigures Our Total Refusal

By Don LaCoss

Issue #12 of Internationale Situationniste reported that, during a general strike in Paris on March 10, 1969, a group identified only as the "Guy-Lassac Street Barricaders" erected a handmade bronze-coated plaster statue of Charles Fourier. The new monument was placed on the empty pedestal where his statue had stood before being torn down during the Nazi Occupation of the 1940s. Within a day, however, French security forces had restored control to the street and the technical service of the Paris prefecture tore the Fourier statue down; like the Nazis, the French government obviously regarded the presence of this early nineteenth-century utopian writer to be a distinct threat to public order.

Arguably, Charles Fourier was one of the most visionary of the first-generation anti-capitalists. An embittered traveling textile salesman, Fourier reacted angrily to the ways in which robber barons and tyrants had hijacked the most revolutionary aspects of the Enlightenment into creating bigger cages and longer chains; the alienating tedium of work, the criminal waste of overproduction, and the ugly violence of destitution and class oppression multiplied rather than diminished under this new world order, and Fourier's constant criticism earned him the distinction of having been imprisoned by the Jacobins during the French Revolution as well as having been spied upon by the secret police of Napoleon and the Bourbon Restoration.

Fourier was disgusted by the degree to which people's lives could be ruined by an emerging class of professional profiteers and financial speculators- "the progress of civilization is real enough," he said with a sneer, "but it is progress in the art of legalizing and multiplying every conceivable disorder." In some ways, he predicted the rise of neo-liberalism in our time, calling it "an art for devouring the future" developed by capitalists through wide-spread "fiscal trickery, systems of extortion, indirect bankruptcy, speculation on anticipated revenue" and of "encouragement given to commercial plundering and rascality." Fourier prognosticated that the day would come when industrialists would "share in the authority of governments and spread everywhere the frenzy of gambling in public funds." In short, civilization was a monstrosity that needed to be overcome.

Historically, Fourier was reacting to the boom of urban industrial-commercial enterprise that burst over Western Europe between 1760 and 1830, a boom that had done so at the expense of the individual's freedom, imagination, spontaneous creativity, and sensibilities. There was no progressive moral revolution that accompanied the violent changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution, and the old, pre-industrial codes of virtue and ethics had become

inextricably complicit in the crass utilitarianism and egomaniacal materialism of laissez-faire bourgeois-liberal domination.

In search of a solution, Fourier imagined decentralized, semi-rural agrarian-artisanal cooperatives founded upon principles of direct democracy and mutual aid. This scheme for a revolutionary reorganization of life on all planes of existence was the subject of his wonderfully weird first book, Theory of the Four Movements (1808), which might be best characterized as a combination of philosophy, cosmogony, industrial psychology, science fiction, and prophecy. In the pages of this great utopian text, Fourier vigorously condemned capitalist markets, bureaucratic excrescence, the oppression of women, and the suffocation of desire by the leviathans of industrial civilization.

To address these wrongs, he proposed a complex system of worker self-management, locally autonomous voluntary associations, and the restoration of existential meaning to daily chores. The goal of this system was "universal harmony," a near-hallucinatory level of sensual creation and gratification that would emerge from intentional communities. The paths toward Harmony would inevitably lead to the evolutionary overcoming of industrial capitalism: animals would learn to play musical instruments, stars will copulate and spray us all with their sexual fluids, weather patterns will shift, new moons will revolve around the earth, the chemical composition of the oceans would change, and human bodies begin to mutate.

I suspect that Fourier may not have intended that people read his Theory of the Four Movements as literal, instrumental prescriptions for social change. What his book did offer, however, was a glimpse of what unleashed passion and imagination could produce if you refused to let your mind be limited by the existing orders of knowledge and institutions of power. Woven throughout Theory of the Four Movements is the obstinate commitment to permanent revolution in service of unconditional liberty which Fourier called "l'ecart absolu," or the "total refusal" of all known theories and models of thought. Total refusal was an integral part of Fourier's social analysis which he expanded to encompass his complete disdain for civilization, a contempt that was necessary for him in order to supersede the conditions of authority preventing him from imagining something else.

"The surest means of making useful discoveries was to deviate in every way from the paths followed by the dubious sciences [Fourier's term for conventional political science, political economy, metaphysics, and morality] which had never made the slightest discovery useful to society. I made it my business to remain in constant opposition to these sciences," he wrote. Fourier was convinced that only a total refusal of all existing philosophical, scientific, and epistemological systems would clean the slate enough to allow new discoveries; as one commentator on Fourier's work has explained, "total refusal stemmed from the sense of the irrationality of moral restrictions and the vast possibilities of liberation implied in abolishing them."

Fourier's equally manic Incoherent Industry (1836)--which began as a pamphlet calling for the abolition of the international slave trade before spiraling off into a frenzy of anti-industrial outrage against the rot at the core of Western civilization's most precious values-continued in the same vein of total refusal. The "incoherent industry" of the title referred to the exploitative, fractured, and dangerous conditions required to keep capitalism alive. Fourier writes in Incoherent Industry: "Civilization raises only one-thirtieth of its children with any well-being, and even they are still dissatisfied! When one sees this shameful fruit of so many sciences, shouldn't one doubt that this is what humans are really destined for, or is it a wasting disease, an interior vice, a secret and hidden venom, a level of transition to be crossed as fast as possible?"

By virtue of its role as a means for avoiding the standard contrivances of knowledge and emotion, total refusal was a useful tool for stepping outside of the bulwarks of insidious distraction and mystification that isolate the individual and insulate him or her from establishing a satisfying connection with the world. Fourier asserted that total refusal was a strategy for bypassing the miserable web of artificial desires that capitalist civilization has used to ensnare so many, a web whose tendrils today would include the unrelenting bombardment of unintelligible babbling that makes up capitalism's advertisement campaigns, the system's penchant for delirious marketing, and the hypnotic effects of its audiovisual mechanisms which capitalists use to obscure the essences of human desire, substituting instead multiple worlds of shallow, flickering illusion where direct experiences have been usurped by the passive contemplation of images, fetishized objects, and associated social activities. At first, total refusal may seem like an evasion or an escape, but it is actually a disavowal of the narrow confines of the "possible" as defined by the numbing and cheerful effects of toxic conformism.

In Raoul Vaneigem's powerful and influential 1967 treatise on the Revolution of Everyday Life, only the poet Lautreamont and Karl Marx are mentioned more often than Fourier. Vaneigem later explained that, for his generation of insurgents, "one of Fourier's great merits is to have shown the necessity to realize immediately--and for us, this means from the inception of generalized insurrection--the objective conditions for individual emancipation. For everyone, the beginning of the revolutionary moment must mark an immediate rise in the pleasure of living, the consciously experienced entry into the totality."

I would add to Vaneigem's comment that this revolutionary moment can only begin with the sustained and daring application of Fourier's concept of total refusal, followed, I hope, by a refusal of Fourierism as well.

Charles Fourier's Anti-Civilization Thought

By Humpty Jackson

"Authors of the uncertain sciences, who pretend to labor for the good of the human race, do you believe that six hundred million barbarians and savages form no part of the human race? Yet they suffer; well, what have you done for them? Nothing. Your systems are only applicable to civilization. Far from succeeding in civilizing and uniting the human race, your theories gain only the profound contempt of the barbarians, and your customs excite only the irony of the savage; his strongest imprecation against an enemy is to wish him our fate, and to say to him: "May you be reduced to working a field!"

—Charles Fourier, **The Vices of Civilization**

The writings of the utopian madman Charles Fourier (1772–1837) are a glorious **fuck you** to all that presently exists, particularly the planetary nightmare known as civilization, and are an invitation to total world reinvention through the powers of the uncontrolled imagination. To Charles Fourier, civilization was the miserable reverse image of how human society was meant to function, an unbridled horror that divided humanity into the few rich and the many poor, and where the interests of the masses were separated from the progress of the civilized system itself (and in fact came to be in an inverse relationship to it). Fourier's case against civilization was sweeping and comprehensive, with specific and minute analysis applied to the ways civilization mismanaged, frustrated, and suppressed all the **passions**, and the resultant inevitable misery of the human being. All political measures and solutions were equally hopeless to this far-reaching theoretician, who argued incessantly for nothing less than a total abolition of civilization (together with all politics) and an introduction of what he called Harmony. Harmony, to Fourier, was the next stage beyond civilization, a stage of planetary equilibrium that will bring together, by an elaborate system of grouping, those of like interests and tastes—or "affective passions"—and provide adequate avenues for their expression. The repressive doctrines of civilization had created a state of internal war within every person because they suffocated the passions, which were imperious and could only be denied at the price of acute pain and mental disease. Work in particular, under civilization, was enslaving and destructive of pleasure, but the elaborately contrived structure of life under Harmony would remedy this by facilitating *passional fulfillment* between instinctive human desires and work. Fourier was absolutely convinced that his meticulously precise arrangements for communal organization were going to "rouse mankind from the frightful dream of civilization and usher in an era of universal happiness" and the essential elements of his utopian schemes provide bountiful food for thought for anarchists and other freethinkers. His rigid designs for everything from architecture to gastronomy to amorous

relations do at times become comically mathematical, but therein lies their originality and ingenious beauty.

Analyzing with visionary acuteness, the past and present history of humanity, and examining the fundamental character of the five distinct social phases, viz., 1) Edenism; 2) Savagism; 3) Patriarchy; 4) Barbarianism; and 5) Civilization, through which it has successively passed,—Fourier ascertained (as any unprejudiced mind might have done before him,) that Man had as yet **never** been placed in a social medium in accordance with his nature.. Yet man, with all his *passions* or *tendencies*, which according to circumstances urge him on to virtue or to vice, and which, in spite of human institutions, have maintained their dominion in all countries and all ages,—man, with all his passions, is the work of universal becoming. The social form, essentially variable in its nature, differing at the beginning and at the end of the same age, differing on the opposite sides of the same mountain or river, is the work of humans. If humans, and the social conditions they are placed in, **clash**, whose is the fault, and whose work must we modify? Surely not Nature's!

Just as tailors and shoemakers might propose one model of their own creation as a standard whereby all people are to be dressed, so our customary philosophers and constitution-framers insist that humans are imperfect, and must be made to bend to far-fetched and oppressive institutions of their self-serving invention, when centuries have proven them to be ineffective in producing the desired end. This misconception of human nature has forced them to uphold their false institutions by means of constraint and tyranny, thus forming a lamentable scission between the lovers of order and those of liberty, and keeping the world in a constant state of turmoil and warfare. The important point, to Fourier, is to fully understand the nature of humans, the primary element of society, and the social problem will then resolve itself into the following terms:

"Man and his passions being given, to determine the social conditions in which these may be harmoniously developed, so as to produce the greatest and most beneficial results by the smallest means."

Fourier divides the whole career of humanity, into thirty-two periods or transformations of society, according to the development of intellect and population. He then compares the federal association of all nations into one socially, politically, and religiously combined unity of the human race, to a human fetus in the womb, when all the organs are united into one complete organism or body. When this body has been sufficiently developed in the womb, the child is born into the world of light and natural respiration; when the collective body has been sufficiently developed in the incoherent state of society, humanity is ripe for being led into the world of sparkling adventures and social peace, and **Harmony**, which is its natural destiny on earth.

This state of social harmony was the object of all Fourier's exalted studies. His social system is a description of all the functions and the institutions of society, as he conceives them in various degrees of Progress and Perfection. As long as the human race is scattered and divided into separate nations, living in a state of ignorance and relative unconsciousness of their respective wants and destinies, humanity is in a state of limbo, or of social darkness, feebleness, and incompleteness, unconscious of its real destiny and natural collective unity. Fourier therefore divides social life and existence into two absolutely different states analogous to those of life in the womb and life after birth. At present we are living in the womb of darkness or of social limbo, as a partially developed fetus lives in the womb, or as a caterpillar crawls upon the earth before it is transformed into a butterfly.

The insecure and jealous Marx whined that Fourier's utopia (Harmony) was all in his mind, that he was obliged to construct a new society "with elements supplied by his brain" because capitalist production was underdeveloped when he wrote. But Fourier's scandalous thinking stands out clearly against the greyness of Marxist (and all Leftist) ideas precisely *because of* its lack of reliance on **reason**. Even today, it has not been bought and sold and, in his harmonic enchantments, Fourier reveals himself to be a bold daredevil and a rich independent mind who can grasp diamonds that have escaped the attention of pedestrian, academic intelligences. In all the vast annals of social theorizing there is still nothing that surpasses Fourier's luminous projected state of absolute Harmony.

To André Breton, who claimed Fourier for Surrealism in his poem **Ode á Charles Fourier** (1947), only minds as febrile and immoral as Fourier's could possess the "extreme freshness" necessary to re-imagine the world in the aftermath of destruction: "Fourier they've scoffed but one day they'll have to try your remedy whether they like it or not ..." Breton was among the first to consult Fourier after World War II, echoing the time when Fourier himself was writing in the early nineteenth century, in a Europe that had similarly collapsed in wars. What Breton found in the writings of Fourier was "the greatest constructive work elaborated on the basis of unrestrained desire" (the very characteristics that have tended to relegate Fourier's corpus to the limbo of eccentric elucubrations). For Breton, what unites Fourierism and Surrealism is the notion of a communal life under the *pleasure-principle* rather than the *reality-principle*, with its consequent suppression of the less controllable and libidinous levels of human beings. When the surrealist Joan Miro writes: "In my work I do not belong to the species, I am a cosmic point of reference," we can also see the relationship between Fourier's apparently absurd theorizations as to cosmo-psychology and surrealisms revolt against "reality". Later, when the same Joan Miro says: "I don't dream of the golden age, but I believe deeply in a world which is better than the one in which we

live and which holds us captive. I believe in a common culture of the future, wide as the countries and seas of our earth, in which the passions and dreams of each person can be realized.", he is stating, in surrealist terms, what the fantastically detailed theory of Fourier is concerned with.

According to Fourier, the world is cosmically out of whack. He blamed the arrogance of the philosophers and the charlatanism of priests for having systematically repressed the **passions**, leaving humankind stuck in an incoherent civilized state for 2300 years. Faced with this universal misery, Fourier heralds the triumphant reign of a Harmonian cosmic order based on his science of Passional Attraction—the primordial, ubiquitous force that connects the whole in infinite social series. According to this order, social formations must be based on a consultation of the passions since they essentially characterize the human being and its community. Conversely, a repression of the passions will result in hypocritical social institutions like marriage and the nuclear family, from which Fourier argued that women must be freed (and in fact, Fourier took the advanced proto-feminist view that the measure of social happiness was the degree of independence of women in society).

"Fourier was the first to show the qualitative difference between a free society and an unfree society."

—Herbert Marcuse

In Harmony, communal living will be the order of the day and will be organized in micro-societies called Phalansteries, founded on collective sensuousness and industry. According to Fourier's group theory, each Phalanstery would be populated by 1620 people—one male and one female for each of the 810 temperaments Fourier recognized. This combination would enable infinite social, aesthetic, and sexual encounters, through which humankind would regain its equilibrium. The Phalanx is "furnished like an El Dorado", and all pleasures—from hunting, fishing, gardening, playing music and theatre, to staging operas—are to be rewarded. The children will organize themselves in Little Hordes where they raise each other and contribute to the everyday life of the Phalanstery. The social series of temperaments, generations, and divisions of labor describe subgroups and passionate inclinations that work in complex ways across the collectivity, resulting in a communal euphoria, a constant social high. In Fourier's famous phrase, "the passions are proportional to the destinies." Forget about genital love: *society is erogenous*, and Fourier had a detailed theory of omnigamous and polygamous love in Harmony. Let the pleasure principle rule. **Don't moralize and don't pathologize.** Seeking the main-spring of action which was to introduce life and motion in the new social medium, and finding that Attraction was the great principle by which the Cosmos gave motion and form to the material world, Fourier was led by universal analogy to suspect that the *spiritual* and *social* world might perchance be subjected to the same principle. This led him, by a succession of

calculations, to the discovery of what he called PASSIONAL ATTRACTION, by which discovery he did for the whole range of science, including that of *society*, what Newton had already done for astronomy and natural philosophy.

"The law of attraction," says Fourier," governs the whole universe, the plant, the insect, and the stars, accomplishing their revolutions. The animals obey a Divine law revealed by instinct, by attraction; all nature groups itself, associates in a harmonious concert, and accomplishes its destiny attractively. Man alone, ignorant of this Divine law, still struggles with his instincts, his desires, his passions, and attractions. In the midst of universal association and the harmony of worlds, human societies are sunk in discord and antagonism: their labors are repugnant; their relationships conflictive. Attraction, not being obeyed, becomes for man a source of suffering and chastisement. His miseries are aggravated by the knowledge of enjoyments he does not possess. Like a bee, transported to a barren rock, languishing from want of flowers to call forth its industry, man, being out of his destiny, is not the less capable of fulfilling it, and suffers in proportion to the distance separating him from harmony and unity".

Attraction in the hands of Fourier is like a magic wand, which enables him to obtain by love and pleasure, what civilization can only obtain by violence. It transforms the most repugnant functions into pleasure and sidesteps the catastrophic and stagnating influence of "rational" political thought.

"I alone shall have confounded twenty centuries of political imbecility and it is to me alone that present and future generations will owe the initiative of their immense happiness. Before me, humanity had lost several thousand years struggling insanely against Nature; I am the first to have yielded to her by studying attraction, the organ of her decrees; she has deigned to smile on the only mortal who has adored her; she has yielded to me all her treasures. Possessed of the book of Destinies, I come to dissipate moral and political darkness and on the ruins of uncertain sciences I raise the theory of universal Harmony."

---Charles Fourier

Harmony will bring about vast improvements, genetically and socially. In keeping with the redemption of its Harmonian birthright, humankind will mutate and over nine generations will reach an average height of seven feet and a life expectancy of 144 years. There will be plenitude on all levels. The Earth's original five moons will be restored and its polar tilt corrected, and the oceans will have lemonade flavoring as the poles become ice-free by 1828. Constantinople is set to be the world capital and planet Earth will be crowned by a permanent aurora borealis. Fourier, a theoretical hedonist if there ever was one, also develops an entire gastrosophie that involves the gratification

of all of our 810 senses (again 810!), trumping the common understanding that there are only five. Likewise, food is a cosmic vision, a "psychedelic gastronomy!" as the editor of the first Danish Fourier translation exults.

If all this sounds outlandish, then consider Fourier's margin of error: all his calculi, he writes in **Theory of the Four Movements** (1808), are subject to the exception of a fraction of an eighth or a ninth:

"This is always to be understood, even when I do not mention it. For instance, if I say as a general thesis, civilized man is very miserable, this means that seven-eighths, or eight-ninths of them are reduced to a state of misery and privation, and that only one-eighth escapes the general misfortune and enjoys a lot that can be envied."

Fourier cannot possibly be taken seriously and this is *exactly* the power of his theories against any *esprit de sérieux*. With his fanciful inventions and hilarious inconsistencies, his writings are too brilliantly ridiculous and extreme to fit into the immense garbage-heap of ideologies that help to organize human misery in the so-called "Free World" today, for they describe a new social order articulated in terms of excess, bedazzlement, and, in Fourier's own words, the "need to protect everything we call vice."

Fourier's pleasure-loving discourse also relates to the systematization and practical application of his radical imagination. He was neither a mysticist nor a reformist nor a revolutionary. Contrary to his reception by Marx and other socialist thinkers, he didn't consider himself a utopian. To Fourier, Harmony doesn't demand work and sacrifice, but is rather the inevitable outcome of "scientifically-adjusted" human behavior. His controversial views on the permissive, innovative character of sexual practices—including homosexual, polygamous, extra-marital, manic, and "omnigamous"—were thus (to him at least) a purely "scientific" appreciation of one way of moving toward new social structures (Fourier himself was prone to an ambivalent extra-mania he termed "Sapphienisme" whereby he was a lover and protector of lesbians and promoted their wellbeing. He assessed there to be about 26,400 companions worldwide with similar ideas.).

In this sense, the aim of Fourierian science is simply to harness Passional Attraction as a cosmic source of energy and to bring mankind within the ordered domain of Passional Gravitation. Thus, Fourier's socialism is not what *ought to be* (the essence of Marxian socialism), but what **will** be—naturally, organically, and without revolution—as soon as our passions are realized socially; as soon as we are tuned in correctly, as it were, to a social space that in Fourier is reconfigured and proportioned harmonically. Of course, Fourier also had a theory for the history of the entire world. His cosmogony is a theory of the "ages of happiness," which explains the progress and decay

of civilization in ascending and descending vibrations, together comprising eighty thousand years and thirty-two social metamorphoses, after which humankind will cease to exist. The ascending and descending vibrations serve to "pattern" movements between different stages of individual and historical being, corresponding to the progression from youth to decrepitude in the human life span. The musical analogy is elaborated in the way Fourier organizes the subject's passions and senses as a keyboard with thirty-two keys.

Engraving of A Perfumer's Dress

In 1814, Fourier "discovered" the Aromal Fluid, a medium for the great chain of being, a connection between the Earth and the rest of the universe. The Aromal Fluid (or Aromal Movement) is a "system for the distribution of known or unknown aromas, which control men and animals, form the seeds of winds and epidemics, govern the sexual relations of the planets and provide the seeds of created species." He notes that, "if everything is connected in the system of the universe, there must exist a means of communicating between creatures of the other world and this." This means of communication is the Aromal Fluid, the supersensible exhalation of the planets. It is an exemplary vital matter: a single, all-pervasive, imperceptible substance—a bit like capital in our present cosmogony, we can say: a universal middleman.

In Fourier's cosmic order, the world is folded in upon itself in analogies mirroring the principles that constitute it (with octaves, harmonies, planetary orbits, and so on). It has no messianic horizon because it is held together by divine, mathematical laws—geometrical principles that contain parcels of all states of being, including their respective polarities and all ambivalent and transitional forms, and that are only complete in the totality of their variety and infinite multiplicity. Every moment in a geometric time-space corresponds to myriad events that are distributed across a plane defined by cycles, scales, and symmetries.

Passional Attraction becomes a tendency that rises into the non-time of 80,000 years of ascending and descending vibrations toward universal harmony and sympathetic fusion within the given order of the cosmic household. Fourier's harmonial vibration is the cosmic timbre of a higher pattern to which the soul is already attuned.

Fourier as a Way of Life

"Fourier's work, focusing on the interplay of passions, desire, emotion, problems of group psychology, sexuality and play, prefigures certain aspects of the psychoanalytic component in modern revolutionary thought. The profound psychological dimension in Fourier's thought, moreover, cannot be separated

from the essentially poetic character of his entire work. For despite the fact that, as far as we know, he wrote no poems, Fourier remains above all a poet."

— Franklin Rosemont, Surrealist Point of Departure

Fourier's dazzling vision for communal living, liberated sexuality, and cosmic harmony resonated with the countercultural "tribal" emancipation and holistic utopian projects of the 1960s, such as Buckminster Fuller's "spaceship earth" and the West Berlin Kommune movement. After his writings were republished in France in 1966–68, commentaries and new translations sprang up across Europe and his work was almost obligatorily referenced in critical writing at the time. As Fourier's teachings had been sporadically realized in communes in Europe, North America, and South America in the nineteenth century, so was there also a psychedelic Phalanstery in the 1960's! As members of the San Francisco commune ***Togetherness*** explained to Dominique Desanti in the late sixties, "We are Fourierists." While Fourier's nineteenth-century followers tended to underplay or even censor his emphasis on the unrestrained development of desire, it seems that his resurgence in sixties' collectivism was focused exactly on administering the Dionysian aspects of his socialism. Accordingly, Togetherness was built on the rule of love, and its denizens embraced Passional Attraction in an exploratory manner that included lesbian and gay relationships, and in which orgies, instituted by Fourier as a superior form of love, were an act of political principle. In Desanti's micro-political turn of phrase, the drop-outs of ***Togetherness*** have found "their universal love, a total tolerance of minoritarian and singular tendencies."

The experiments of these Fourierian communes raise the question (and the bar): Can we imagine a way of living that is, if not "insurrectionary", at least unobstructed? No one since Fourier has produced such an enthusiasm-provoking stimulant to the perennial social problem: no figure has yet been able to surmount and go beyond his rapturous collective experience of individualism in revolt with the petty fiction of realism. If we were to make the mistake of considering Fourier's dazzling texts a **blueprint** (a closed system or completed doctrine) for a new life/world then we would, very quickly, get sucked back into an abominable "Real" that we can never master—and enter into just another putrefied discourse that reproduces the world as it has always been. But there may still be enough fluctuant life-energy and intellectual fire to make for a new revolutionary *Fourierian* climate, one that might not express itself through a sudden upheaval, but by a quiet, underground movement, by growth and imagination rather than insurrection—provoking the broadest discussions about the possibilities of merging dream and materiality.

Giraffe and Anti-Giraffe: A Fourier Glossary

Passions
The fundamental human drives. They are not simply emotional states but rather impulses actively and relentlessly seeking gratification.

Passionate Attraction
The tendency of every passion to seek its own gratification. This tendency is felt prior to any reflection and is persistent despite the opposition of reason, duty and prejudice. The learned world is wholly imbued with a doctrine termed MORALITY, which is a mortal enemy of passional attraction.

Butterfly
One of the three distributive passions. The passionate need for variety and periodic change.

Cabalist
One of the three distributive passions. The passionate penchant for intrigue.

Composite
One of the three distributive passions. The desire for passions appealing to both the senses and the soul. The composite is the most beautiful of the twelve passions, the one which enhances the value of all the others.

Polygyne
An individual endowed with multiple dominant passions.

Harmony
A social order organized so that the gratification of individual pleasures and desires serves to promote the common good.

Abundance
Abundance will result from the organization of each *passional series*, inaugerating the reign of Harmony, which will multiply the pastures, the orchards, the poultry-yards, and all food-generating environments, while simultaneously multiplying human happiness and eliminating repression. In civilization we see the abundance of products alongside poverty and hunger, and if the people of civilization do not die of the urgent need for food, they die of misery slowly through passional privations, surrounded by products in superabundance. In civilization poverty is born from abundance itself.

Absolute Divergence
"The surest way of making discoveries," wrote Fourier, is "to deviate in every way from the paths followed by the uncertain sciences." Utilizing a method to which he gave the name *l'ecart absolu* (Absolute Divergence) and proceeding

from the known to the unknown by analogy, Fourier elaborated an unsparing and supremely imaginative critique of the existing order, and an impassioned appeal for its total transformation in the service of human desire. Overflowing with the most brilliant and prehensile speculations, an irresistible disdain of *what is* and a majestic vision of *what can be*, Fourier's ideas exerted a profound influence on the development of surrealism after the Second World War, and are now finding their way into the heads and hearts of mutants everywhere seeking to restore to revolutionary thought a clairvoyant and creative dynamism.

Giraffes
According to Fourier, the hieroglyph of truth is the giraffe. Since the characteristic of truth is to surmount error, the animal that represents it must be able to raise his head higher than all the others: this the giraffe can do, as it browses on branches 18 feet above the ground. Fourier reasons that just as truth is only beautiful when it is inactive, so the giraffe is only admirable when it is at rest. And when the Harmonic Order has enabled us to become adept at the use of truth and the virtues which are excluded from our civilized lives at present, a new and magnificent creation will appear in the form of the anti-giraffe.

Levity
A force opposite, or polar, to Newton's gravity. Thus ideas "fall" under the influence of gravity and "rise" under the influence of levity.

Modes of relationship

All passions, according to Fourier, can be envisaged at several levels and classified according to the following scale:

Association
It has been vaguely formulated as a principle that humans are made for SOCIETY: It has not been noted that society may be of two orders, the *scattered* or *disjointed* and the *combined*. The difference between one and the other is the difference between truth and falsehood, between riches and poverty, between light and darkness, between a comet and a planet, between a butterfly and a caterpillar.

Unimode
A *simple* (single passion) or *composite* (combining spiritual and material passions) association, but restricted to the smallest combination of people.

Multimode
A big group joining together.

Omnimode
An international mass movement gathered for an affective passional purpose.

Accord
A bond formed between individuals or groups on the basis of shared or contrasting penchants.

Phalanx
The principal social and economic unit in Fourier's utopia. A community or association consisting of from 1600 to 1800 members.

Combined Order
A synonym for Harmony.

The Lemonade Ocean & Modern Times

A Position Paper by Hakim Bey

1. One More River to Cross

In our *experience* (that is, not merely in intellectual speculation but in everyday-life) we have found that "the Ego" can be as much of a spook as "the Group"--or indeed, spooky as any abstraction which is allowed to control behavior, emotion, thought, or fate. Deeply as we've been influenced by Stirner / Nietzsche/ Tucker/ Mackay, we have never held to any rigid ideological or psychological form of Individualism / Egoism. Individualist anarchism is lovely dynamite, but not the only ingredient in our cocktail.

Our position, put quite simply (in the form of a truism): The autonomy of the individual appears to be complemented & enhanced by the movement of the group; while the effectiveness of the group seems to depend on the freedom of the individual.

In the 1980's--thru poverty, terror, mediation, & alienation--the individual was more & more isolated, while all forms of "combination" (communes, co-ops, etc.) were eliminated or else reduced to pure simulation. The pleasures of the isolated ego have begun to pull as the "self" is gradually reduced to a comm-terminal or funnel for commodity-fetishes. From here on out we will demand effective means of *association* which depend neither on Capital nor any other form of representation. We reject the false trance of the Spectacular *group*--but we also reject the lonely ineffectiveness of the embittered hermit. Always one more illusion to overcome!

2. Maximizing Marx

"Type-3 anarchism" (a term coined by Bob Black) designates a radically non-ideological form of anarchism neither Individualist nor Collectivist but in a sense both at once. This current within anti-authoritarianism is not a new invention, however (nor has it been given any final form). One can find versions of it in such works as **_bolo'bolo_**, or in the writings of the Situationists. One Situ group ("For Ourselves") went so far as to suggest a synthesis of Max Stirner & Karl Marx, who in real life were bitter enemies. They pointed out that Stirner's psychological existentialism does not necessarily conflict with Marx's economics. Bakunin criticized not Marx's original critique but rather the solution he proposed: dictatorship.

As for us, Stirner outweighs Marx because psychology precedes economics in our theory of liberation--but we read Stirner in the light of Bakunin & the early Marx--the light of the 1st International & the Commune of 1870--the light of Proudhon.

In order to clarify this position, we'll introduce two more names from our "family tree," Steven Pearl Andrews (1812-1886) & Charles Fourier (1772-1837). In a sense we find them a more congenial pair than Max and Marx, because they both made significant donations to the cause of erotic liberation (a central concern of the Mackay Society), unlike say the virginal Bakunin, or Marx or Proudhon--both prudes--or for that matter Stirner, Nietzsche, or Tucker, who all more or less avoided the subject. Serious historians of the Social often ignore Andrews & Fourier because they were "cranks"--utopianists, marginals, Blake-like visionaries. One needs to be something of a surrealist to appreciate them. But our appreciation is more than erotic, aesthetic, or spiritual. We also draw from them a precise picture of our own position in the "type-3" current of contemporary libertarianism.

3. Lemonade Ocean

Fourier was amazing. He lived at the same time as De Sade & Blake, & deserves to be remembered as their equal or even superior. Those other two apostles of freedom & desire had no political disciples, but in the middle of the 19th century literally hundreds of communes (phalansteries) were founded on Fourierist principles in France, N. America, Mexico, S. America, Algeria, Yugoslavia, etc. Proudhon, Engels, & Kropotkin all read him with fascination, as did Andre Breton & Roland Barthes. But today in America he is forgotten--not one complete work by Fourier is in print here--a few anthologies came out in the 70's but have vanished--& only one work about him (a fine biography by Jonathan Beecher, which may serve to stir some enthusiasm). Fourier's own disciples suppressed some of his most important texts (on sexuality), which did not appear in print till 1967. It's about time he was re-discovered again.

To quote Fourier out of context is to betray him. To say for example that he believed the ocean would turn to lemonade in the future, when humanity comes to live in Harmonial Association, is to make him a figure of fun (as Hawthorne did in The Blythedale Romance). To understand the beauty of the idea it must be seen in the context of Fourier's grand & brilliant cosmological speculations, rivals in complexity of Blake's prophecies. For Fourier the universe is composed of living beings, planets, & stars, who feel passion & who carry out sexual intercourse, so that creation itself is continual. The miseries of Civilization have deflected Earth & humanity from their proper destiny in a literal cosmic sense. Passion, which we have been taught to regard as "evil," is in fact virtually the divine principle. Human beings are microscopic stars, & all passions & desires (including "fetishes" & "perversions") are by nature

not only good but necessary for the realization of human destiny. In Fourier's system of Harmony all creative activity including industry, craft, agriculture, etc. will arise from liberated passion--this is the famous theory of "attractive labor." Fourier sexualizes work itself--the life of the Phalanstery is a continual orgy of intense feeling, intellection, & activity, a society of lovers & wild enthusiasts. When the social life of Earth is harmonized, our planet will re-join the universe of Passion & undergo vast transformations, affecting human form, weather, animals, & plants, even the oceans.

Passion draws humanity into *association* just as gravity draws celestial bodies into orbital systems. The phalanstery is a little solar system revolving around the central fire of the passions. Thus, although Fourier always defends the individual against the tyranny of the *Civilized* groups (what we've called Spectacular groups, in the modern context), nevertheless for him the group in its ideal form takes on a quality of absoluteness. It's been jokingly said of him that the only sin in his system is eating lunch alone. But "association" cannot be considered a form of collectivism or communism--it is not strictly "egalitarian," nor does it eliminate personal property or even inheritance. Moreover, all the elaborate titles & ranks Fourier delighted to invent for his Harmonians were voluntary & purely ceremonial. The Harmonian does not live with some 1600 people under one roof because of compulsion or altruism, but because of the sheer pleasure of all the social, sexual, economic, "gastrosophic," cultural, & creative relations this *association* allows & encourages.

4. The Convivial Individualist

One of Fourier's favorite illustrations of how harmony works even in Civilization was the dinner party, where wine, wit, & good food are enjoyed according to a spontaneous order, not subject to any law or morality. Social Harmony would be like a never-ending party: Fourier envisioned people leaping out of bed at 3 a.m. to pick cherries as if they were rushing off to a grand ball.

Steven Pearl Andrews (who also used the dinner-party metaphor) was not a Fourierist, but he lived through the brief craze for phalansteries in America & adopted a lot of Fourierist principles & practices. His chief mentor was Josiah Warren, first exponent of Individualist anarchism (or "Individual Sovereignty") in America--although Warren in turn inherited much from certain strains of radical democracy & Protestant "spiritual anarchy" which can be traced to the earliest Colonial period. Andrews was a system-builder, a "logothete" like Fourier & Blake, a maker of worlds out of words. He syncretized Abolitionism, Free Love, spiritual universalism, Warren, & Fourier into a grand utopian scheme he called the Universal Pantarchy.

He was instrumental in founding several "intentional communities," including the "Brownstone Utopia" on 14th St. in New York, & "Modern Times" in Brentwood, Long Island. The latter became as famous as the best-known fourierist communes (Brook Farm in Massachusetts & the North American Phalanx in New Jersey)--in fact, Modern Times became downright notorious (for "Free Love") & finally floundered under a wave of scandalous publicity. Andrews (& Victoria Woodhull) were members of the infamous Section 12 of the 1st International, expelled by Marx for its anarchist, feminist, & spiritualist tendencies.

Like Fourier, Andrews created a "religion" to replace all the corrupt authoritarian cults of Civilization. We admit that this mystical tendency in both thinkers interests us a great deal, & again rouses our sympathies more than the cold atheism (or "fundamental materialism") of a Stirner or Marx. Type-3 anarchism includes for us the heritage of the Ranters, Antinomians, & Family of Love, as well as radical forms of buddhism, taoism, & sufism.

Like Blake, Fourier & Pearl Andrews built systems of their own so as not to be slaves to someone else's--& these grand structures included psychological, sexual, & spiritual dimensions missing from mere ideological or philosophical systems. The structural details of Harmony & Pantarchy are fascinating & inspiring, but for us their deepest value lies in the daring of their total "radical subjectivity." Fourier & Pearl Andrews created poetics of life, not merely politics or economics, & it is this aspect of their work we most admire & wish to emulate.

5. Universal Pantarchy & North American Phalanx

In a more immediate sense, however, we find that Fourier & Pearl Andrews offer useful arguments & practical hints for the establishment of a kind of association which seems even more desirable now than before the age of Late Capitalism, Dead Communism, pure Spectacle, & the eerie alienation of credit cards & answering machines, polls & surveys, computer viruses, & immune-system breakdowns. In the 1980's even the anti-authoritarian "Margin" fell into a spooky state of communication via the mail, BBSs, xerography, & tape. Physical separateness can never be overcome by electronics, but only by "conviviality," by "living together" in the most literal physical sense. The physically divided are also the conquered & Controlled. "True desires"--erotic, gustatory, olfactory, musical, aesthetic, psychic, & spiritual--are best attained in a context of freedom of self & other in physical proximity & mutual aid. Everything else is at best a sort of representation. The entire revolt against Civilization can be seen (at least from one point of view) as an attempt to recreate the autonomous intimacy of the band, the *free association of individuals.*

Morbid loneliness is no better than the engineered consensus of the New World Order--in fact the two are but opposite sides of the coin, like homelessness & rent: false individualism vs. false collectivism. In the face of this illusory dichotomy we will continue to propagate Individual Sovereignty--but at the same time proclaim that our first & most urgent research of the decade must concern the nature of association.

Thus we announce our intention to revive & amalgamate both the Universal Pantarchy & the North American Phalanx, the local (NY area) manifestations of Andrews' & Fourier's systems. The new Universal Pantarchy & North American Phalanx (UP/NAP) will be first a society of appreciation & research (more musty-dusty 19th century obscure crackpots to venerate & imitate!)--but also & perhaps more importantly it may become a nucleus of association. We plan to make field trips to the original sites of Modern Times & the Phalanx; we intend to revive the Fourierist tradition of banquets; we plan to construct a shrine to Fourier & the Pantarch; we may even go so far as to produce another newsletter!

And perhaps our research will actually lead to further experiments in the creation of temporary autonomous zones, free times & spaces excavated in the walls of Babylon--creative autonomy & comradeship in the no-go areas where power has "disappeared"--& who knows? Even in our lifetimes, **the mutation**..."A crank? Yes, I'm a crank: a little device that causes revolutions!" (E.F. Schumacher).

Long live Individual Sovereignty! Long live the Pantarchy! Long live Harmony!

-- April 7 (Fourier's birthday) 1991 NYC

THE BOREAL CROWN
and
THE DOWNFALL OF CIVILIZATION

by Anonymous

In 1808 the illuminated theorist and "Utopian Socialist" Charles Fourier launched the first fully realized and consciously revolutionary attack on CIVILIZATION by publishing his Theory of the Four Movements in France. No one noticed -- any more than anyone noticed the books of William Blake, the only thinker of the era comparable to Fourier. In this brief text we cannot attempt a full report of Fourier´s brilliant utopian system of society, which he called HARMONY. But we could at least recall his programme, which involved the reorganization of human life into large groups, called Phalanxes, arranged in "Series" according to "Attraction" – that is, according to shared "Passions". For Fourier, Passion was the sole possible organizing principle for utopian life. In brief: if everyone were free always to do exactly what they desired, all reason for social discord would vanish. Scarcity of any good -- material, spiritual, erotic – can only be artificially imposed on society by CIVILIZATON, for Nature is naturally "generous". Marriage, poverty, work, morality, loneliness, alienation, violence, boredom -- these civilized miseries constitute the perverse results of a system which benefits a few at the expense of the health of Earth herself.

Fourier believed not only that humans are the desiring subjects of a desirable object (i.e., Terrestrial Harmony), but also that the Earth and all other celestial bodies (planets, stars, etc.) are also living, sentient, desiring beings. The "force of attraction" that holds the universe(s) together can only be described as Passion; Erotic desire organizes not only the microcosm of human society but also the macrocosm (e.g., our solar system) in a mandala of Harmony -- the "Lineaments of gratified desire" as Blake would say.

Thus everything, quite literally **everything**, is moved solely by erotic attraction. In Harmony we shall work only at that which satisfies a Passion -- and we shall be free to choose "Attractive Labor" -- and since humans are inherently passionate beings, Harmonian economics will replace the illusion of scarcity with the reality of super-abundance. Everyone will be "rich. Everyone will eat like an 18th century French gourmet (but the food will be healthy because it will be prepared according to the Harmonian science of Gastrosophy) – and everyone will enjoy at least the "utopian minimum" of erotic pleasure. This immense intensification of animal/animate life will soon produce beneficial mutations even of the human body: we shall need only a few hours of sleep per night, we shall grow taller and more beautiful, and

within a few generations we shall each have a tail with an extra "hand" at the tip, and an extra eye in the palm of the hand . Moreover the climate will change and the seas will turn something like lemonade. Most of these changes will occur not through evolution and its endless eons, but almost immediately--spontaneously, virtually overnight -- as soon as we abandon CIVILIZATION and institute HARMONY in its stead.

One reason why these changes will occur so rapidly can be explained by the fact that Civilization has literally knocked Earth out of its true position in the cosmos. Normally, since stars and planets are sexual beings, they enjoy sexual intercourse. Their sex organs -- so to speak -- consist of great cosmic rays (which Fourier calls "aromal rays"); celestial bodies project these rays at one another and thereby experience the bliss and fertilizing potency of erotic contact. In former times Earth also possessed an aromal ray and enjoyed its benefits -- which manifested in the peace and plenty, gender harmony and sexual freedom of the hunting/gathering (or gardening) economy of the Old Stone Age. But Civilization disrupted the aromal ray and Earth lost its orgasmic potential. As Wilhelm Reich would put it, Earth was cut off from the cosmic source of **orgone** energy: Civilization equals sexual repression and erotic scarcity.

Now clearly, if human society were to overcome the malign local effect of civilization and institute the Harmonial Era, our planet would at once recover its cosmic sexuality and its aromal ray. Immediately Earth would be bathed again in the perfume or illumination or jizm of the stars. Revivifying effects would begin to appear almost at once, and the initial efforts of the first Harmonians would be rewarded a thousand-fold through the vast new reservoirs of cosmic energy now available via Earth's aromal ray.

In **Theory of the Four Movements** Fourier also revealed that Earth´s aromal ray -- or rather its shattered fragments and dispersed remnants -- can still be seen in the polar aurorae. The Northern and the Southern Lights (Aurora Borealis and Australis) resemble torn curtains of light and No Wonder! At one time they constituted coherent rays of brilliant color and scent which penetrated the yoni of the aether like an infinite lingam, and served as the pathway and vaginal gate for the infusion of subtle illumination-juices from everywhere in the multiverse. (Incidentally, this theory could be used to suggest that UFO´s are not extraterrestrial but consist in fact of local manifestations of "deadly orgone", just as Reich feared]

Now it has occurred to us that if the downfall of Civilization and the establishment of Harmony would result in the restoration of the "Boreal Crown" (as Fourier called it) to full coherence, then perhaps the opposite might also prove true. THE RESTAURATION OF THE BOREAL CROWN MIGHT RESULT IN THE DOWNFALL OF CIVILIZATION AND THE TRIUMPH OF HARMONY.

We believe it´s worth trying. But the big question facing us is -- obviously -- how? How does one go about repairing the Aurora Borealis?! If we knew the answer to the question we´d simply go and do it. The purpose of this text is to share our findings so far and to propose a framework for future research and action. We are convinced that this project will necessarily involve a certain amount of coordinated action by a great many people. We envision participation at many levels. Moreover, we have no intention of acting as the center of this conspiracy. We prefer to remain anonymous, and it is possible that our specific actions will be carried out more-or-less clandestinely. We will publish no address; so if you want to share ideas with us please send texts to the publication in which this communique appears - or else find out who we are by word of mouth and contact us directly.

So far, we have arrived at the following understanding. The popular aurorae are connected in some way with the magnetic poles rather than the geographic poles. The North Magnetic Pole is at this moment the more accessible of the two, since it is currently moving very slowly across northern Canada. As of this writing it is near Barthurst Island. The latitude of peak auroral activity is actually described by an oval ring whose center is a few degrees off the magnetic pole in the direction of midnight. The lights glow most intensely during magnetic storms, caused by an increase in the solar wind interacting with Earth´s magnetic field. At such times the auroral oval grows both southwards and toward the pole. The greatest auroral activity occurs at the peaks of the eleven-year sun-spot cycle. It should be possible, nonetheless, to determine certain times and spaces at which our chance of acting on the Boreal Crown would be optimal. For example, if we determined that our action should occur at the magnetic place, we would calculate a time when weather conditions and geomagnetic activity would coincide to offer a maximal "window of opportunity". If we decided that our actions should occur within the auroral oval, then a different set of space/time parameters would come into play.

Besides the questions of time and place we also face the question of effective action. At present we believe that we should consider the probable necessity of installing one or more "aromal devices" at one or more key points connected with the auroral/magnetic activity. These aromal devices should be considered "machines" for the repair and restoration of the Boreal Crown. At present we remain uncertain about the design of such devices; but we intend to build at least one, and to install it at the chosen time and place. We hope that other groups and individuals will work on their own theories and also produce their own devices. Then, when a time and place have been determined, we will make this information publicly known. We will proceed to carry out an expedition, let´s say, to the Magnetic North Pole, timed to arrive at a certain day or period of days. We hope that others will launch their own

simultaneous expeditions and that we will all rendezvous at the appointed moment and location. There and then we will carry out all our planned installation, actions, rituals, etc., together, in the context of FESTIVAL.

Obviously a certain element of psychic technology enters into this project – and it is precisely on this psychic and "astral" level that many will wish to participate in the action. Energy can be added to the activities of the Arctic expeditions (and to the actual installations of aromal devices) by the thought projections and sympathetic actions of supporters and well-wishers all over the globe. We consider the possibility of a GENERAL STRIKE on the day of the festival, as the vital component of the operation. Everyone who cannot be with us at the installation of the site can carry out some symbolic and/or material action against Civilization, against Work, against oppression, boredom and alienation. This might consist of nothing more than wearing a symbol of the Festival (button, badge, flower, color, scent, etc.). Some participants might simply wish to take a day off work and loll around, thinking about the Northern Lights. Groups might want to organize actual strikes or demonstrations against the miseries of Civilization, and in favor of Attractive Labor or the Utopian Minimum. Artists and creative groups might erect sympathetic installations or perform supportive rituals, wherever they might happen to be at the appointed hour.

Our project at present calls for the further refinement of all these ideas, and for their widest possible dissemination. These tasks are perhaps best carried out by many groups and individuáls simultaneously and more-or-less anonymously, so that the best ideas and images will have a chance to circulate by word of mouth and by various informal networks. In this way they will have a chance to take on a life on their own and to circulate under their own power, so to speak, in a natural, organic manner. In order to succeed this Festival and General Strike needs to belong to everyone and anyone. Already this text is the product of a group -- a group that believes that its ideas will sink or soar solely according to the degree of Attraction they radiate. The one central idea is the restoration of the Boreal Crown to its primordial coherence as Earth´s aromal ray; around this center the event must come into being spontaneously, like the mandala of a snowflake, like a true holiday, like an uprising. The event therefore, must create itself.

We might, however, speculate in more detail about our vision of the aromal device or machine for repairing Aurora. Certain themes have already been touched on, and we expect the full structure of the device to precipitate and crystallize around this or other related themes: Magnetism, the Sun, the Earth´s magnetic-tail, magnets (the first compass was a magnetized needle floated in water), "animal magnetism", sexual attraction, sexual fluids, aromas, perfumes, colors, lights, the North, the Arctic, hunting, gardening, the Old Age, night, stars, the North Star, the Moon (measurement of time), clocks,

gold, crystal, ice, rays, coherent light, curtains and ribbons of light, orgone, heraldic emblems (symbols of the events) such as flowers, colors, geometric shapes, hieroglyphs, banners, music, dance, ritual, arctic shamanism, the Millennium, the end of Civilization, restoration of Harmony, peace, brilliance, delicious food and drink, transformation, the esoteric, the clandestine, the hidden, mutation, orgy, the erotic manias, performance, opera, alchemy, the mythology and the folklore of the Northern Lights, mental energy, the visualization of coherent light as aroma, energy from the stars, more orgone, blue, mirrors, maps, invocations.....

Imagine a "machine" with such "moving parts", miniaturized to the size of a small box, taken to the North Pole, installed -- and activated. Imagine it as a focus for the concentrated desire of a world sickened by Civilization -- work, oppression -- a vast desire channeled into one image: the Boreal Crown in full glory -- and one goal: the downfall of Civilization. In combination: a Festival of Light.

-- Anonymous

Publishers Commentary: What have we got to lose?

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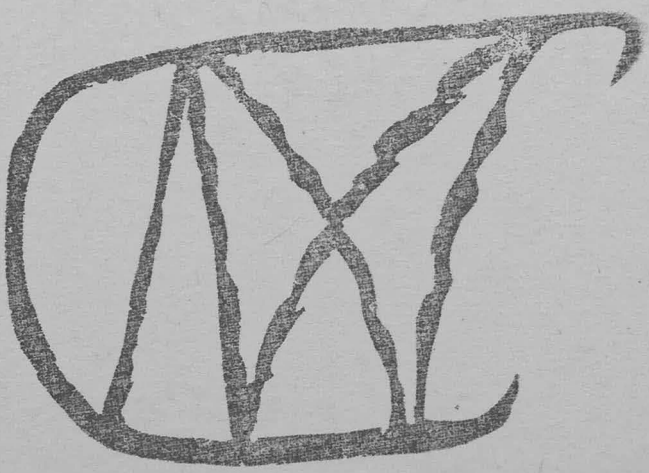

Sheboygan, Wisconsin

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